

Message Text

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43

ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 ARA-16 ISO-00 CAB-09 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

DOT-00 INR-11 NSAE-00 RSC-01 FAA-00 SS-20 NSC-07

PM-07 SCS-03 SCA-01 SY-04 PRS-01 USIA-15 L-03 /110 W

----- 081282

R 151540Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5335

INFO AMCON RIO DE JANEIRO

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE CARACAS 7857

RIO FOR FAA IFO

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRN, VE

SUBJECT: CIVAIR: VISCOUNT CRASH ON MARGARITA ISLAND

REF: CARACAS 7795; 10 FAM 521.3H

1. THE FIFTEEN YEAR OLD VICKERS VISCOUNT OWNED BY THE GOVERNMENT-OWNED LINEA AEROPOSTAL VENEZOLANA (LAV) CRASHED INTO A MOUNTAIN-SIDE ON MARGARITA ISLAND, BREAKING INTO TWO PARTS AND BURNING. THE AIRCRAFT CARRIED 44 PASSENGERS AND FOUR CREW. THERE WERE SEVEN SURVIVORS OF WHICH SIX DIED BEFORE REACHING THE HOSPITAL. THE CO-PILOT IS SERIOUSLY HURT BUT EXPECTED TO LIVE.

2. THE AIRCRAFT TOOK OFF FROM BARCELONA IN RAPIDLY DETERIORATING WEATHER WITH GUSTS OF UP TO 70 KNOTS. WHEN REACHING MARGARITA, VISIBILITY WAS DOWN TO ZERO. THE PILOT ATTEMPTED TO MAKE TWO PASSES OVER THE RUNWAY BUT COULD NOT EFFECT LANDING. HE THEN REQUESTED THE TOWER TO AUTHORIZE A TEN-MINUTE OVERFLIGHT OF THE ISLAND TO WAIT FOR AN OPPORTUNITY TO LAND. IT WAS IMMEDIATELY AFTER THAT REQUEST WHEN THE AIRCRAFT CRASHED.

3. WHILE THE OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT BY LAV MANAGEMENT STATED THAT

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WEATHER WAS THE ONLY CAUSE OF THE ACCIDENT, SEVERAL QUESTIONS

REMAIN OPEN: WHY WAS THIS SCHEDULED FLIGHT AUTHORIZED FROM MARQUETIA AIRPORT EARLIER IN THE MORNING WHEN THERE WAS A HURRICANE WARNING FOR THE AREA OF DESTINATION? WHY DID THE AIRCRAFT TAKE OFF FROM BARCELONA TO FLY THE MARGARITA FIFTEEN MINUTES AWAY WHICH AT THAT TIME WAS UNDER VERY HEAVY WEATHER? WHY DID THE PILOT CHOOSE TO OVERFLY THE ISLAND INSTEAD OF GOING OUT OVER THE SEA? WHY DID THE PILOT FLY AT LOW ENOUGH ALTITUDE IN ZERO VISIBILITY TO HIT THE HILL? THE SITUATION IS COMPLICATED BY THE FACT THAT THE AIRCRAFT HAD OVER 50,000 HOURS IN REGULAR AIRLINE SERVICE AND WAS OPERATING UNDER SEVERE WEIGHT AND STRESS LIMITATIONS AND PROBABLY SHOULD NOT HAVE BEEN FLOWN INTO SUCH WEATHER WITH A FULL PASSENGER LOAD.

4. THERE WERE NO UNITED STATES CITIZENS ON BOARD THE AIRCRAFT.
MCCLINTOCK

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CIVIL AVIATION, PASSENGER LIST, AIRCRAFT ACCIDENTS, POLITICAL PARTIES, ELECTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 15 AUG 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CollinP0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
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Review Comment: n/a
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Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <17 JUN 2002 by elyme>; APPROVED <27 FEB 2003 by CollinP0>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
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